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Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04205 261715Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00
SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 NEAE-00 ACDA-07 SSM-03
IO-13 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /070 W
----------073671 261742Z /45
O R 261627Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5010
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4205

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SOPR, LE, SY
SUBJECT: UPI STORY ON SYRIAN TROOPS TO SOUTH LEBANON.

1. LOCAL UPI CORRESPONDENT NED TEMKO INFORMED EMBASSY THAT HE WAS CALLED IN BY ADF COMMANDER SAMI KHATIB AUGUST 26. KHATIB COMPLAINED ABOUT AUGUST 24 STORY OF TEMKO WHICH SAID ISRAEL HAD AGREED TO ALLOW SYRIAN TROOPS TO MOVE TO MOVE TO SOUTH LEBANON, PROVIDED THEY WERE UNDER NOMINAL COMMAND OF LEBANESE ARMY COMMANDER. KHATIB TOLD TEMKO THAT BECAUSE OF STORY, "I CAN NO LONGER TOTALLY GUARANTEE YOUR SAFETY." HE ADDED THAT TEMKO SHOULD CORRECT STORY "EVEN IF IT IS TRUE." KHATIB REMINDED TEMKO THAT FIVE DAYS WERE NEEDED TO GET AFP CORRESPONDENT PAUL DELIFER RELEASED FROM JAIL "IN DAMASCUS". (DELIFER WAS ARRESTED ABOUT TEN DAYS AGO, AND AFP HAS CLAIMED HE WAS HELD IN LEBANON).

2. KHATIB SAID THAT SYRIA WAS "VERY DISAPPOINTED IN UPI FOR THIS STORY." HE SAID THAT SYRIA'S MAIN OBJECTION WAS THAT STORY IMPLIED SOME SORT OF IMPLICIT
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DEAL BETWEEN DAMASCUS AND TEL AVIV.

3. TEMKO NOTED TO EMBASSY THAT NEITHER SYRIAN NOR LEBANESE OFFICIALS HAD EXPLICITLY DENIED STORY. (FONMIN BOUTROS TOLD PRESS AUG 25 THAT "I DOUBT IT.")

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4. TEMKO SAID THAT HIS SOURCE, WHO WAS IN DAMASCUS, HAD JUST TOLD HIM THAT WHILE STORY WAS ORIGINALLY TRUE, IT WAS NO LONGER VALID BECAUSE OF PUBLIC EXPOSURE.

5. TEMKO ASKED IF EMBASSY COULD CONFIRM OR DENY STORY. WE TOLD HIM WE HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF ANY SUCH ISRAELI AGREEMENT AND NOTED THAT ISRAELIS HAD DENIED IT. TEMKO REQUESTED EMBASSY TO ASK DEPT. IF IT HAD ANY OTHER INFORMATION SO THAT HE WOULD KNOW WHETHER OR NOT TO PRINT CORRECTION. EMBOFF SUGGESTED HE HAVE UPI OFFICE IN WASHINGTON CONTACT STATE DEPARTMENT FOR ANY FURTHER INFORMATION.

7. COMMENT: MR. TEMKO, WHO IS NEWLY ARRIVED IN LEBANON, HAS OBVIOUSLY MADE A BAD MISTAKE AND IS SERIOUSLY WORRIED ABOUT IT. END COMMENT.
PARKER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Concepts: TROOP DEPLOYMENT, PRESS RELEASES, JOURNALISTS, ALLEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 26-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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TAGS: SOPN, LE, SY, IS, (TEMKO, NED)
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